

# Manipulation of the truth - trench warfare

Government, Army



Advertisement During WW1-Manipulation of the Truth. Mitchell's Golden Dawn  
The picture we are studying is an advertisement for Mitchell's Golden Dawn Cigarettes. The advert was made during WWI therefore it is based and inspired by a war theme. It is from the World War One in 1914 and shows a scene from a trench with soldiers. There are a number of "inaccuracies" in the picture which would not have been in the trench. I intend to point these out and explain what would have been different in a real trench. I also intend to explain why the picture has been drawn this way. Firstly the most fallacious error of all is the soldier's foolish and inapt "grin" on their faces which make them seem as if they are looking forward to death. There is evidence supporting the fact that many soldiers obtained shell shock because of the trench warfare. It would be shockingly reckless if one were to beam cheerfully with delight after being aware that the chances of death are soaring. In a real trench, these men would have been anxious and petrified. Next the positions of the soldiers are ridiculous; one in particular is standing on top of the trench revealing his entire body and smiling directly at their opponent practically waiting to be shot to death. In an actual trench the soldiers would have been trying to cover themselves as much as possible, and clutching their rifles whilst praying for their lives to be spared. My next point is the pleasant clean atmosphere. Their uniform suggests that they are going to a parade- with an ironed jacket, soft parade hats, and nicely groomed hair cuts and mustaches. This was not the case in the actual war; the soldiers were all grubby and filthy. The picture has neglected all negative influences like the barbed wire, dead carcasses and corpses. Last of all is the trench itself. The trench presented on the picture is too small compared to

the actual ones. As well as being too small it is also too straight and an actual trench would have been designed to be zigzagged for strategic and defensive reasons. The straight trenches in the picture would have easily been targeted and immediately destroyed. There are also no communication trenches, this makes us assume that the army is only made up of 5 men with no back ups and evidently enough that is inaccurate. However, we must remember that this is an advertisement. The main purpose of this advert is to promote the product itself but meanwhile also promoting war. This advert was used as a propaganda which excluded and neglected the negative things, manipulated the truth and used detachment. We also know that the government censored everything that depressed war. This was done to keep morale up and so that men would be encouraged to join the army. The advert is extremely valuable for the historian because it tells us a lot about how the government controlled everything from the letters that the soldiers wrote to the media. We learn about the tactics the leaders used to manipulate with the truth to present a positive image to the nation. It teaches us about the lack of knowledge that was let out to the people. However it also allows us to view the events from a different perspective, for us to be aware that possibly the manipulation of the truth was just what the people needed. In conclusion, I do not think the Mitchell's Golden Dawn advert is an accurate image of trench warfare. However I think that the advert was deliberately made inaccurate for the various reasons I have mentioned above. We must consider that if it were to be drawn accurately there would have been many constrictions from the government. Therefore

manipulation of the truth was needed to send out a positive image of war and also persuade people to buy their product.